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RHEFAAA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY 0625
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2463
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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN STILL UNDECIDED ON NABUCCO SUMMIT IN
BUDAPEST?

REF: BUDAPEST 0039

Classified By: Ambassador Richard E. Hoagland: 1.4 (B), (D)

¶1. (C) Hungarian Ambassador Janos Balla called on the Ambassador January 20 to deliver the current Hungarian draft of the Budapest Nabucco Summit scheduled for January 27. He expressed deep frustration that one week before the summit he has yet to pin down who will represent Kazakhstan, if anyone.

¶2. (C) Ambassador Balla said originally both President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Prime Minister Karim Masimov had been invited. In Balla's presence at a reception in December, Nazarbayev had instructed Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin to ensure representation at an appropriately high level. Balla was to have met with Minister of Economy and Budget Bakhyt Sultanov on January 16 to hear whom Kazakhstan would send to Budapest, but Sultanov cancelled the meeting with only two hours' notice and had his staff tell Balla the Foreign Ministry would provide the name. However, Balla has so far been unable to get an appointment with the appropriate deputy foreign minister (Foreign Minister Tazhin returned only on January 20 from winter vacation). The European Ambassadors are hosting a lunch on January 21 for Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Sauat Mynbayev, where Balla hopes he can pry out a reply from Mynbayev.

¶3. (C) Also on January 20, Czech Republic Ambassador Bedrich Kopecky told the Ambassador that he thought Prime Minister Masimov had asked Minister Mynbayev to attend the Nabucco Summit, or to send a suitable representative. However, Post has not yet independently confirmed this report.

¶4. (C) Balla said he has no proof but a strong suspicion that Russia is putting heavy pressure on Kazakhstan not to attend the Nabucco Summit. He asked rhetorically, "If PM Masimov can fly to Moscow on short notice for the Gas Summit on January 17, why is it so hard to find someone for the Nabucco Summit?"

¶5. (C) Ambassador Balla is well-briefed on Kazakhstan's hydrocarbon resources, especially in the North Caspian area. He said mostly Hungarians ran the Soviet hydrocarbon operations around Atyrau before Kazakhstan's independence, and he stays in close touch with the over 1,000 Hungarians

who still live and work there. According to Balla, Europeans are increasingly aware that Kazakhstan's North Caspian has "massive" untapped natural gas deposits (no further information), although the country is focusing mostly on oil production at this time.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: President Nazarbayev and a large gaggle of ministers will be in New Delhi January 23-26, and Astana is increasingly consumed with preparing for that important visit. However, the government of Kazakhstan can usually walk and chew gum at the same time, and so it seems a bit curious at this late date it has not yet told Hungary who, if anyone, will go to Budapest to attend the Nabucco summit.
END COMMENT.
HOAGLAND